

CIVIL AVIATION NEWS

*More Power for
Tudors: I.C.A.O.
Vacancies: Radar
Meteorology.*

FUTURE ASCENDANCY: An artist's impression of the Bristol 175, twenty-five of which it is announced that B.O.A.C. are proposing to order. Their long-term plans envisage the operation of these types in 1953-54



BRISTOL 175s PROPOSED FOR B.O.A.C.

PROPOSALS that a production order should be placed for 25 Bristol 175 aircraft have been announced by B.O.A.C. In its latest form the Bristol 175 represents a great advance on the M.R.E. specification evolved by B.O.A.C. in 1947. The aircraft is planned so that Bristol Centaurus piston engines or Bristol Proteus airscrew turbines may be fitted, the design allowing for easy interchangeability. Comparison with the performance of the Lockheed Constellation indicates that if fitted with the Centaurus piston engines the Bristol 175 would have performance superior to that of this American aircraft. When fitted with the Proteus airscrew turbines the cruising speed of the Bristol 175 is expected to be at least 75 m.p.h. higher than that of the Constellation. Advantages of the Proteus airscrew turbine would be the great increase in passenger comfort due to the reduction of noise and vibration and, since the Proteus operates on kerosene rather than aviation petrol, increased safety would result from a reduction of fire hazard. Cabin lay-outs now under consideration include a 38-passenger sleeper version for use on the longest routes and a 60-passenger version which would provide a standard of comfort comparable with the Constellation. As an alternative, the Bristol 175 could be adapted to carry over 70 passengers, though the conditions would be more austere and these aircraft might be used to fly passengers at reduced fares. According to the present proposals the aircraft is scheduled to be in operation on the medium range Empire routes in 1953-54. In making this decision B.O.A.C. have been anxious to take full advantage, in a practical form, of the lead which this country has over other countries in the development of airscrew turbines for aircraft.

STRATOCRUISER ALL-UP WEIGHT

CERTIFICATION of the Boeing Stratocruiser by the U.S. Civil Aeronautics Administration for a gross weight of 142,500 lb has been announced by the Boeing Airplane Company. During certification tests and manufacturer's trials over 700 hours have been flown. The new gross weight is 7,500 lb more than the figure originally guaranteed and the plan has been approved for a design useful load of over 30 tons. The cabin air conditioning system has made possible an approved altitude of 25,000ft, at which height cabin pressure is equal to that at an altitude of 5,500ft. B.O.A.C., S.A.S., and four U.S. airlines have ordered Stratocruisers.

MERSEY ACCIDENT

ON the night of November 11th a D.H. Rapide, flying from Dublin to the Isle of Man, was, on account of fog, diverted to Speke after circling Ronaldsway for 40 minutes. When approaching Speke from the Mersey the aircraft's fuel became exhausted and it fell into the Mersey causing a loss of seven lives. The pilot was Capt. J. C. Higgins, who had very extensive experience of this route, having flown Rapides to

and from the Isle of Man for some 14 years. Capt. Higgins previously flew with B.E.A. and it was at the end of May this year that he terminated his service with the Corporation to start Mannin Airways, owners of the aircraft, of which he was managing director. Of the eight occupants of the aircraft, six passengers and a crew of two, only one passenger survived.

B.E.A. GROUND ENGINEERS STRIKE

ON the grounds that an incentive bonus scheme would be unfair to them, some B.E.A. ground engineers commenced an unofficial strike on Sunday, November 7th. Plans to introduce such a scheme were first discussed by representatives of all concerned early in 1947, and after making a careful review of the various other methods of increasing efficiency the decision was subsequently taken to introduce the premium bonus scheme initially in the Certificate of Airworthiness hangar at Northolt. It was felt that as workers of many aircraft constructors and some maintenance specialists were paid on the premium bonus system, the work of B.E.A. ground maintenance could well be put on a similar payment basis. Furthermore, repair organizations handling military aircraft during the war had operated satisfactorily on these lines even though the work undertaken was of necessity far less systematic than are periodic overhauls and maintenance. Before the scheme was finally agreed discussions were held between B.E.A., central panels of trade union representatives and local panels, at which details were worked out and the times were set for the various stages of operations.

Agreement to the scheme and its acceptance by these panels was obtained, and it is understood that every effort has been made by the Corporation to explain the system to the men concerned and to secure their co-operation and understanding of the principles involved. B.E.A. introduced the scheme in a genuine effort to reduce manpower costs, which last year amounted to over £1 million, taking the realistic view that a financial incentive would be the best way to achieve more work per man hour without detracting from the quality of workmanship.

As must be widely known the principle on which the premium bonus scheme operates is that times are set for the various stages of maintenance operations. These times are worked out by rate-fixers, who determine the actual number of hours required for various operations. These are indicated on cards and operators clock on and off when the job is started and finished. Whatever time an engineer is able to save on the time set is converted into a cash sum, 50 per cent of which goes into the employee's pay packet and 50 per cent to the employers.

It has been said by some antagonists to the scheme that it leads to a hurrying of the work and a resultant poor quality in the finished job. This argument is not supported by fact since obviously if a hurried or unsatisfactory piece of work is rejected by the inspectors it must be rectified to their satisfaction and no extra allowance of time is given for such rectification. It is clear, therefore, that the engineer whose work passes inspection at the first submission will be saved